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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the social studies curriculum should extend the concept of critical thinking to social criticism. The purpose of social criticism is to foster a society that is characterized by community, freedom, and equality. In essence, it raises the question of how to live. The social critic looks beyond the symptoms of a social problem to the underlying patterns of human relations and societal interactions. In examining the curricular work of Beard, Oliver, and other social reconstructionalists, the author argues that they fall short of developing a truly critical analysis of the human condition in society. There is no moral questioning of the values underlying social and political conflicts. While some other methods of teaching critical social thinking skills have been attempted, most are incompatible with public schools. This paper stresses that a public school curriculum aimed at critical thinking ought to be available. It is suggested that the pedagogical elements of such a curriculum would include the following: (1) an open minded orientation; (2) veracity and compassion; (3) social action by seeking emancipatory values in everyday life; (4) knowledge of relevant information; (5) awareness of analytic concepts derived from critical social science; (6) reflective awareness of methodological concepts; and (7) understanding common categories of critical reasoning. (Author/JK)

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WHAT CURRICULUM IS BEST SUITED TO DEVELOP A CRITICAL MINDED PUBLIC?

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TOWARD A MORE RADICAL
CRITICAL MINDEDNESS IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

Teaching critical social thinking skills in the public school has been attempted in a variety of ways. The analysis of public issues approach emphasizes jurisprudential reasoning skills based on the fundamental values of the American creed. The structure of the discipline approach employs reflective problem solving skills derived from the behavioral or positive social sciences. And the rationalistic approach to values education combines a relativistic ethic with moral reasoning skills. Research and development projects associated with the above mentioned approaches have contributed important understandings and teaching materials to the social studies school curriculum. Yet it is clear that these approaches do not exhaust the idea of critical mindedness as it can be gleaned from the tradition of critical social theory. Pupils need to become more intellectually independent and yet morally committed in a modern world where the public has witnessed the lying of a president and where the uncovered subversive activities of official agencies are directly related to people's livelihoods on local and global levels.

In this paper an argument is made for a more radical concept of critical mindedness. Just like the English curriculum teaches students literary criticism, so the Social Studies School curriculum should extend the concept of critical thinking to social criticism. Competent citizenship implies the concept of the citizen as social critic.

Strengthening Public Rationality and Public Morality

In an early NEA report wherein the concept of Social Studies was first given its present day meanings, the Committee on Social Studies stated that social studies was to be directed to the education of all citizens, and that the subject matter of social studies should be determined by pressing social problems. Ever since this programmatic statement there has been a strong social reconstructionist movement in the Social Studies which aims to promote the objective of critical minded citizens. Critical mindedness is exemplified in everyday life in a variety of ways. It may be seen in the talk of the man in the bus who is energetically debating the meaning and implications of land speculation for public housing. Critical mindedness is exemplified in the attitude of women who are questioning the quality of life of women in the work place. And critical mindedness is visible in the excellent journalism of investigative reporters, as well as in the investigative work of community action groups. Critical thinking has long been a major aim of education and the subject of much curriculum research and development. However, here the concept of critical thinking is used in a somewhat special meaning. Critical thought, in this sense, is related to a social science tradition that aims at the development of new world views and at the promotion of social change in order to bring about increased quality of life--freedom, justice and a sense of community for each individual.

From the point of view of the individual and society developing critical mindedness means the strengthening of public rationality and public morality. This means the strengthening of the disposition of people to engage in public discourse, i.e., examining, interpreting and debating issues and topics of everyday social life. Public controversy, public issues and the public debate of critical issues is possible only in societies where there exists a certain freedom of speech. Societies where the liberties of public speech are censored, either directly or indirectly, therefore

have a stunted development of the idea of publics. The concept of "publics" refers to the fact that certain groups of people have certain interests in common, and it implies that the belief systems of such groups are accessible to public discourse through the available media of communication. A public has opinions which lie in the public sphere; that means, these opinions can be influenced or changed. In his writings on critical theory Habermas notes the historical newness of the public sphere. During less recent times the social structures of Western societies did not permit a loosening of the controls and the norms by which people led their lives. However, in present day societies whole new sectors of public life have been opened up to critical discussion: sex, family life, religion, business practices and even the subversive dealings of government security agencies. The question that must be posed by educators is, under what conditions and to what extent critical investigation of public issues is indeed possible. Some philosophers and social scientists have begun to address and clarify this question. Is rational discourse in contemporary societies possible? And what are the prerequisites and the limits of public rationality?

In accordance with the ideals of renaissance enlightenment there has developed in everyday public life a model of man who has inalienable rights to freedom of thought and freedom of speech, without being restrained by threats of violence and domination. Whereas until recent days such rights were largely the protection of the emerging bourgeoise, in our days the habitat of the public sphere has become the claim of the common citizen. But even at present the existence of the public sphere is an ideal and only partly a reality. For example, in seventeeth century Holland, celebrated for its tolerance, not every individual was free to speak his mind. This freedom was limited by the actual inequality of individuals in bourgeois society. What is more, the burghers who were less restrained by political sanctions to question established norms were themselves limited ideologically by the interests

and the belief systems of the social class to which they belonged. This disposition to perceive and interpret the social world in terms of a particular social or cultural interest orientation is what sociologists have referred to as ideology. In our society too, freedom of expression is ideologically predisposed; and access to the public sphere is distributed unequally by wealth, power, and public office. Habermas has argued that the stronger the social inequality and the more severe the conflicts of interest that divide society, the less likely will the public be able to participate critically and communicatively in the everyday topics of the social and political process. In repressive societies violent conflict may be the only alternative if social change through free public discourse is blocked by structural censors of inequality built into the institutions of everyday public life. Thus, it is in the context of domination mediated by special economic, political or socio-psychological interests that inequality leads to limits and distortions in the realization of community and of a critical analysis and discussion of public issues.

The Purpose of Social Criticism: Raising the Question of How to Live.

Ultimately, social criticism has a practical purpose: its objective is the striving for a type of society or a living together that is characterized by community, freedom and equality, and that is, therefore, most justifiable from a rational-moral point of view. How should one live? How should a society be run? What life style is most reasonable considering a certain level of technology and social organization? These are questions that are implicated in all our practical actions. Every opinion we express and every decision we take regarding private and public concerns is, in a sense, a personal response to the question how a person should live. Critical thought that is derived from critical theory always reflects on this question, maintaining a dual focus on the actual and on the possible. That is social criticism constantly moves between two states of affairs: the way things are and the way things could or should be. Critical mindedness is characteristic of people for whom, quoting Dell Hymes, "the way things are is not reason enough for the ways things are, who find fundamental questions pertinent and in need of personal answer, those for

whom security, prosperity, and self-interest are not sufficient reasons for choices they make" (p.7). Implicit in the critical perspective then is the assumption that things don't have to be as they are found. Many social scientists have stressed the point that human beings and their nature are very much a product of the culture within which they have grown up. An equally important observation is that culture, in its many varieties is very much a product of the making of people. What this means is that social criticism makes use of utopian thought; not in the negative sense of a fixed unrealizable dream, but in the positive sense of life-goals-in-the-making, a theory of progress, that supports the dedicated pursuit of worthwhile life styles. Social criticism is guided by a fundamentally constructive and positive outlook regarding the perfectability of society and of the individuals making up that society.

Critical self-reflection leads man to become more aware of himself and of the compulsions, norms, or the oppressive habits that appear to steer his actions. Criticial knowledge is situated, for example, in our awareness of, or insights into the way we self-deceptively construct rationalizations for the kinds of things we do, or for the way we like to think about ourselves. For example, overindulging in self-damaging, inconsiderate, or unsocial practices such as smoking, over-eating, or neglecting to care properly for dependents typically are subject to personal excuses or justifications such as blaming others for our own faults or shortcomings. Rationalizations are rooted deeply in consciousness. And, as Dewey said, it is easier to wean a miser from his hoard, than a man from his deeper beliefs. Rationalizations are "make beliefs" in which we really manage to believe because we want to do so. They protect us from feelings of guilt, shame, burdening responsibility, etc. However, once we have become aware of our inclination to rationalize for personal problems, then we have gained, in principle, access to a road toward self-improvement.

The same is true for societies in general. Ideological beliefs are the collective rationalizations of communities of people. By blaming social groups for their

"race", "laziness", or "deficient IQ" we can apologetically justify the relative wealth or privileges we enjoy. Collective greed or inhumanity is turned into the self-lauditory conviction of our superior abilities or our deserving work record, thus ignoring the exploitative relationships that bind men to men and nations to nations. To the extent that societies believe that they have organized their insitutions on democratic principles while relying on blind authority, vested power, or "law-and-order" for their maintenance, to such an extent the self-understanding, or knowledge these societies have about themselves is ideological, false, repressive, or misleading.

Critical mindedness then is an attitude of mind that is committed to pursue emancipatory values and to think deeply about the nature of human misery and the possibility for happiness and community in a world that seems intent to destroy itself. Critical mindedness is a courageous attitude since it refuses to blind itself with easy, comfortable or ungrounded explanations. Social critics sometimes must point an accusing finger to obstructions of social justice. This too requires courage, as well as a capability for empathetic and sensitive social consciousness. In the words of Jules Henry, to think deeply in our culture is to grow angry and to anger others; and if you cannot tolerate this anger, you are wasting the time you spend thinking deeply. One of the rewards of deep thought is the hot glow of anger at discovering a wrong, but if anger is taboo, thought will starve to death.

The argumentative structure of social criticism is a form of discourse that is rational, yet it is committed to fundamental emancipatory values, such as the principles of freedom, and equality and community. This is so even though practical criticism and social action (as contrasted to theoretical social criticism) usually gets entangled in real contradictions of everyday life. In concrete situations egalitarian values and values associated with the principle of liberty are frequently at odds.

The structure of critical argumentation differs from the structure of traditional (empirical-analytic or positivist) scientific reasoning in the sense that critical discourse employs terms (categories) and procedures (processes) that go beyond the objective world of positive science.

Aspects of Critical Reflection

Some features of social criticism can be illustrated by drawing an analogy with the form of inquiry associated with the task of Freudian therapy. While the therapist investigates the subconscious, repressed or otherwise "hidden" dimensions of an individual's personal life-history, in a similar manner, the social critic investigates the social subconscious and the systematically repressed or otherwise "hidden" dimensions of the cultural history of society. And as the therapist analyses personal problems by attending to verbal expressions, gestures and actions, so the social critic studies societal problems by analyzing language, symbolic structures and societal conditions of a given culture. The social critic, much like the therapist, traces the so-called surface phenomena or "symptoms" of a social problem down to the underlying distorted patterns on the existential base of human relations and societal interactions. The task of the social critic, just like the therapist, is to penetrate beyond the problematic surface phenomena and to probe behind the pathological symptoms in order to reveal the hidden meanings which are associated with distorted social relations. Just as the therapist must be sensitive to discern distortions in an individual's psychological life history, so the social critic must be able to detect distortions which are situated in the institutions and social norms of the history of society. Erich Fromm used the concept of the "social unconscious" to refer to the phenomenon that certain human experiences are repressed systematically in a given society. In every society there are common experiences which are acknowledged while other experiences remain unknown or unaware to the members of this society. Just like individuals do not "permit" themselves to face certain experiences (Freud's

idea of the "individual unconscious") that are personally unacceptable, so does society not permit its members to be aware of facts and social situations which are contradictory and therefore obstacles to the continued operation of society. The social unconscious "covers up" or "censures out" of the focus of awareness those experiences that are essential to a critical understanding of society. This is where the idea of self-deception and illusionment comes in. A person who is unwilling or unable to admit to the real but hidden motives behind his actions, therefore, holds things for true and real that are falsehood and unreality.

From Charles Beard to Donald Oliver

Some of the finest examples of reflective thought in the Social Studies can be found in the line of curriculum theory and research that connects the writings of men such as Charles Beard (A Charter for the Social Sciences in the Schools), George Counts (Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?), Theodore Brameld (Karl Marx and the American Teacher), to Maurice Hunt and Lawrence Metcalf (Teaching High School Social Studies), the early work of Donald Oliver, Fred Newmann, and James Shaver (Teaching Public Issues in the High School), and more recently to James Shaver and Guy Larkins (Analysis of Public Issues), and also Donald Oliver (Education and Community) and Fred Newmann (Education for Citizen Action). Furthermore, curriculists such as James MacDonald, Dwayne Huebner, Esther Zaret, John Mann, and Michael Apple have stimulated recent curriculum thought from a perspective that mobilizes the epistemology of new and imported forms of social inquiry: hermeneutics, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology and critical theory. And philosophers of education such as Walter Feinberg have joined forces by showing how the ideas about progress and technology held by the liberal educational theorists have limited their notions of freedom, equality, community, and the possibility of more fundamental social critique.

A well formulated social reconstructionist curriculum position entitled, "The

Selection of Content in the Social Studies" was prepared by Donald Oliver in 1957. In it he lays the foundation for the rationale of the Public Issues Program that led to the well-known American Education Publications and more recently to the Analysis of Public Issues curriculum materials devised by James Shaver and Guy Larkins. In his 1957 article Oliver reaches back to one of the outstanding scholars in the history of the Social Studies, Charles Beard. Like James H. Robinson and other representatives of the Progressive Movement, Beard had a strong faith in social progress and in the perfectability of man. While articulating the inablility of empirical science to deal with issues of value, and while clarifying the role of value frameworks in the perception of social issues and problems., Beard stressed the importance of scientific knowledge in determining the direction of society and of progressive social change. In his textbooks written for public school students the image that most clearly comes across is the idea of a pluralistic society made up of conflicting forces, conflicting interests, as well as the power of resolving social conflict through compromise and democratic procedures. Democratic society, says Beard, "is founded on the assumption that all social conflicts will be fought out within the framework set by the fundamental law through the exchange of ideas." The concept of society and of social change that Beard articulated was not a blind conservative scheme, serving the vested interests of establishment and status-quo. Neither was his concept of social progress an unrealistic and fixed utopian order. Instead, Beard's analysis of society and of social progress was that of a dynamic process, "a changing order of things which . . . bears within itself the possibility of a more perfect order of things, never utopian and fixed, but always involving the perils of choice and the advantages of improvement." (1932, p. 53-55)

However, the contribution of Charles Beard toward a program for the development of social criticism and critical mindedness in the social studies, falls short of a truly critical analysis of the human condition in society. Walter Feinberg, who

provides an insightful review of the liberal progressives in education, notes the unstated assumption in Beard's intellectual orientation, namely, that most if not all conflict in society, whether of a violent nature or otherwise, could be justified as having contributed to greater social justice and harmony" (1976, p. 184). In the textbook that Beard wrote in collaboration with Bagley there is no moral questioning of the values underlying social and political conflicts. In the political philosophy of Beard, even the robber barons, the railroad builders, the land speculators and the capitalists served their function in the development of this peace-loving nation, says Feinberg. There is little concern with the social injustices that accompany the basic inequalities in economic-political power in North American society; there is little about the toil or the hardship of the laborer who built the railroads or who labored in the factories.

There is a natural transition from the, in Oliver's terms, "tough-minded analytic thinking exhibited by Beard" to the social conflict approach developed by Oliver and his associates. The image of a pluralistic society and of social progress riding on waves of conflicts of interests, that features so prominently in Beard's writings, is also the central theme in Oliver's work.

Like Beard, Oliver's pluralistic society is one where there is constant tension and conflict between and among social groups for the hegemony of certain values. Each group in society has its own unique conceptions of the "good life" and of the life goals worth striving for, according to Oliver. Some groups seek to establish dominance over others in the attempt to universalize its own particular value orientation and thereby create a monopolistic society. This, says Oliver, is wrong. "The good society is not one in which everyone behaves in the right way according to some commonly agreed upon definition; rather it is one in which individuals and groups in each new generation are allowed considerable latitude to develop their own standards and their own tastes." The problem for the social studies, therefore,

(according to Oliver), is "the problem of maintaining the multi-value society, in the face of opposing social processes." On the basis of his analysis of the nature of society as a multi-value, pluralistic social organization of competing groups, Oliver derives the basic goals for a social studies curriculum. For the social studies teacher it "means consciously and explicitly teaching the student to deal with the problem of defining liberty within the context of the total society." Rather than seeing conflict as something negative, he sees it as a positive mechanism for maintaining equilibrium among constantly competing groups.

Oliver's description is quite compatible with the image of a media-critical consciousness and a debating public. A socially critical public generates a form of social discourse that is aimed continuously at the uncovering of social conditions, social relations, institutions and modes of life that have a distorting, constraining or repressive effect on the everyday life of the members of society. Oliver and his associates pushed the reconstructionist approach in the Social Studies further than many educators in the nineteen sixties were prepared to go. However, modern times is catching up even with those who recently still were in the vanguard. The weakness of the liberal-progressive orientation of Charles Beard and more recently of Donald Oliver is that it has a narrow focus and that it lacks a more serious commitment to emancipatory values. The fundamental value concern of the liberal-progressive orientation is the preservation of "freedom" or "liberty" in the face of authoritarian forces. Oliver notes how people place certain values on status symbols, depending on the groups to which they belong: "seals, mansions, split-level houses, union cards, leather jackets." No doubt these symbols are expressive of deeper lying value contradictions. But which? In Oliver's article and also in the later materials coming out of the Harvard Public Issues Approach, the meaning of "social conflicts" which are the engine of social progress, are hardly ever unpacked in a radically critical way. There is no explicit recognition and condemnation of the exploitative human

relationships, the greed, the inhumanity and the violence of physical suffering and material poverty that so frequently are implicated in the idea of conflicts of interests and domination in society.

In the Western world there exists a form of violence which is perhaps the most repressive and subtle type of violence for all those subjected to it. This kind of violence is the passive violence of the refusal to recognize covert or real violence. Marcuse refers to this form of violence when he explicates the concept of "intolerable tolerance." It is reflected in the relativistic ethics of a humanitarian form of liberalism that embraces the value of tolerance in the face of intolerable human suffering. Intolerable tolerance is evident in the attitude of politicians, commentators or social scientists who argue, for example, that all critique of the exploitative effects of the private enterprise system simply depends on one's way of looking at the problem. From the writings of critics such as I.F. Stone or Erich Fromm it can be gleaned how the social sensitivities and value commitments of these social critics differ from the social consciousness of the liberal-progressive view. One major point of observation is that the social reconstructionism in the writings of Charles Beard and more recently in the Social Studies writings of Oliver, Newmann and others emphasize one major democratic value, freedom at the neglect of other values. Freedom or liberty has been interpreted in a narrow sense, namely freedom to speak one's mind, and the freedom to differ opinions and be tolerated. One wonders however if the pursuit of freedom ought not to be interpreted in a wider sense to include the pursuit of community and the removal of exploitative relationships which seems to permit some individuals to privilege themselves at the expense of the exploited. For a clarification of this point I once again turn to the work of Donald Oliver.

Education and Community

Whereas in his early work Oliver was preoccupied with the democratic value of teaching students the virtue of the pursuit of freedom and tolerance, now his major

concern is with the value of "community" (Oliver, 1976). The problem of modern society, according to Oliver, is that it lacks authentic community. Oliver regrets the alienating and dehumanizing features of modern institutions. In contemporary society, according to Oliver, an imbalance has been effected between two conflicting forms of life, the primitive and the modern aspects of community. In order to redress the community in everyday experiences, we must focus on the development of the socalled "primitive social life forms" which are characterized by intimacy, authenticity, and morality in human communications.

Although Oliver professes to offer a radical critique of schooling he somehow manages to formulate his critique in categories which possess minimum political charge. Rather than selecting more conventional political concepts. Oliver makes distinctions which seem designed to soften their political bite. He perceives three groups in society who advocate social change policies. First there are the egalitarians (read the socialists) who strive for equal opportunity of choice for all individuals. According to Oliver, the egalitarians view our society as supermarket where each individual should have equal access to the goods and privileges produced by society. Social improvement must occur through change of the economic institutions. The second group are the developmentalists (read the liberals) who perceive social progress as a process whereby the members of society increasingly are capable of participating in and enjoying the "higher" cultural goods. Social improvement for the developmentalists, says Oliver, consists in educating people to function on higher levels of cultural refinement and sophistication.

Thirdly there are the evolutionists whose view is adopted and articulated by Oliver. In contrast to the utilitarian perfectionist view held by the egalitarians and the developmentalists, the evolutionists recognize that the key problem of contemporary life resides in the imbalance created by modernist social forces. The evolutionists realize, on the basis of a scientific understanding of human nature,

that modernity contained in attempts at human engineering and in administration criteria of efficiency and effectiveness result in a societal deficiency of communitarian values. Therefore, the express purpose of Oliver's latest work is to present "an overall strategy for how a teacher who embraces an evolutionist or communitarian vision of society might spend his life." (1976, p.8) This strategy consists of (a) revising curricular content so as to create a new view of how human beings might live on this planet, (b) searching for educational experiences which are consistent with such a view, and (c) participating in building communitarian neighborhoods.

Newmann and Oliver (1967) have suggested that the striving for more community may be attempted in multiple educational contexts. They distinguish three critical types of context: the school, the work place, and community seminar. Within the more formal structure of school curriculum, the value of community must be sought in the social quality of the learning experience. Sometimes one wonders whether schools have been organized deliberately to inhibit the growth of community rather than foster it. To the extent that schools fragmentize and departmentalize human relationships they contribute to alienation, the exact opposite of community. The many forms and varieties of the work place and public institutes are potential contexts for learning experiences, even though these places are not usually recognized for their educational value. The point is, that a factory, a library, a political party headquarters, a hospital or a shop can be (and often are) powerful centres of learning and community building. Community seminars are special occasions for people to get together around common issues, concerns, projects, and activities that may lie in the sphere of sociality and friendship, or in the realm of community politics, societal movements, etc.

Community refers to those communicative relationships that establish bonds of sociality, authenticity and intimacy among human beings. Lovingness, friendship, comradeship, and care are modes of community. Authors such as Erich Fromm (1971)

have argued that the lack of a capacity for loving, compassion and genuine care for one's fellow beings is the most serious sickness of Western society. Lack of community marks an alienated mode of existence wherein individuals live estranged lives--estranged from themselves and from others. While Oliver has explained the lack of community by way of reference to an imbalance between primitive and social life forms, others such as Bertell Ollman (1975) have attempted to trace alienation more specifically to distortions in the social structures of society. These distortions refer to the separations or breaks in social relationships between man and his relevant environment.

On an abstract level Habermas has conceptualized community as "an ideal situation of communication." This is an idealized model of a social situation in which the participants are able to reach true understandings and true consensus about issues of concern to them. However, warns Habermas, community cannot be achieved if the ideal situation of communication is distorted by social inequalities whereby some participants dominate it over others. The same is true in real societies and in real social situations. When social relationships and institutions have developed into privileged and underprivileged classes, true community can no longer be realized. It may be argued therefore that not only the principles of freedom and community but also equality is a moral principle that should lie at the very centre of the social studies curriculum.

Equality and Inequality

Inequality and the aspiration for social equality is an old theme--a political motive that lies at the roots of much social upheaval and social movement in historical and in modern times. The value of equality rests on the simple observation that some have more than others: wealth, food, property, housing, leisure, access to health, power, etc. Probably inequalities have always been questioned. And when inequalities are questioned the need for justification arises. In the words of Gouldner,

"equality is a value-affirmation which one group makes as a critique of the privileges held by another group" (1976, p. 144). Why should some (individuals, groups, countries) have more than others? Elaborate ideologies have been developed through the ages to convince those who were less privileged that inequality is an inevitable condition of mankind. The inevitability of inequality has been argued from the point of view of religion, history, science, as well as in terms of naive everyday beliefs about basic human nature. But people are "created" different and not unequal. Inequality in terms of income, wealth, housing, food and other privileges is a fact of social life, not a fact of genetics. Even those who in present times defend the inevitability of inequality usually content that these inequalities are disappearing or that they will diminish in time (Wallerstein, 1975).

Rokeach has argued convincingly for the existence of two prime values, equality and freedom, underlying all political thought in present day societies (1973). From a content analysis of political speeches and writings Rokeach has been able to sketch how the values of freedom and equality are associated with four political orientations: communism, socialism capitalism and fascism. Traditionally these political orientations are situated on a simple continuum from left to right. For example, radical or Maoist communism is located at the extreme left while various forms of socialism are termed more moderately leftist. Similarly, capitalism is to the right of the political centre while fascism commonly is placed at the extreme right. Instead of this single-value left-right classification Rokeach has suggested a two value quadrant. On the basis of a content analysis of political positions as evidenced in the writings of proponents of four ideological positions Rokeach argues that a more radical critique is not just further to the extreme left (Maoist) or the extreme right (Neo-Fascist) of a liberal position. Instead a more complex picture emerges of four main types. Each type is located at the extreme corner of the four quadrants that are constructed by the horizontal low-high continuum of the value "freedom" and the vertical low-high continuum of "equality". Communism as exemplified in the writings of Lenin values

equality or egalitarian values highly but places a much lower value on freedom or liberty. Socialists such as Bottomore, Fromm, Thomas and others place a high value on both freedom as well as equality. In the corner of the third quadrant is located the capitalist ideology as exemplified in the writing of Goldwater. The latter demonstrates a high priority with freedom but little concern with equality. And the fascist orientation as derived from a sample of Hitler's writings places a low value both on freedom and equality.

The meaning and relative importance people place on the values of freedom and equality in the scheme of their total value framework probably is very much a function of their personal upbringing, social class, and especially the societal and cultural context within which a person has been socialized. Moreover, people in everyday life are largely unaware of the true character and the contradictory nature of the many beliefs they may hold. The problem then for the educator is, how can the positive values of both freedom and equality be promoted in Social Studies students? The work of Rokeach, again, may provide useful suggestions for the development of a critically oriented curriculum. On the basis of findings from extensive research into the nature of values and belief systems Rokeach has suggested that lasting changes in values, attitudes, behavior and more significantly, in personality traits can be effected through the technique of self-confrontation. He reports that "experimental subjects had undergone lasting change in their rankings of the two values that have been found to be distinctively political (freedom and equality)". And Rokeach continues, "changes in rankings of these two political values had culminated in change in related political attitudes and behavior" (1973, p. 334). The basic mechanism initiating a process of change is an affective state of self-dissatisfaction, which is induced when a person becomes aware of certain contradictions in his total belief system. Subjects in Rokeach's experiments were given the opportunity to compare themselves and the way they scored on a value-preference scale with various

other social groups. For example, if a subject indicated little care for "equality" but much care about "freedom" then the subject was shown how people who value equality more highly differ from those who place less emphasis on equality. The crucial element of this approach is to confront subjects with contradictions in their self-concept and belief system. The more such contradictions implicate self-conceptions says Rokeach, the more likely that these contradictions will induce self-dissatisfaction and the more likely that the ensuing value changes will endure in a personality (Rokeach, 1973, p. 286).

Building a Critical Orientation into the Curriculum

From the perspective of a critical theory of man and society, the question, what knowledge is most worthwhile teaching, must be posed incessantly. How should a person live? How should society be run? And, importantly, what Social Studies curriculum is best suited for developing a critical minded and "talking" public, able to address and act upon issues of worthwhileness? Different responses to this question have led to alternative approaches in the development of a socially aware and critical minded citizenship. In reaction to the danger of overintellectualizing the idea of critical mindedness in the classroom, some educators such as Fred Newmann have experimented with out-of-school, community action oriented curriculum. Secondly, improved versions of the jurisprudential, issues oriented curriculum materials have appeared. Especially noteworthy is the Analysis of Public Issues materials devised by Shaver and Larkins, (1973). There also have been attempts to build more radical (rather than liberal-progressive) curricula based on leftist interpretations of labour history, social progress, everyday life issues and issues of social inequality. An example of this approach is the Quebec Working Class Curriculum constructed by the militants of the Quebec Education Federation. Other educators have argued that the development of curricula for social critical consciousness is fundamentally incompatible with the conservative structure of the institution of schooling. They suggest that alternative schools must further this task.

The position taken here is that a public school curriculum aiming at critical mindedness (in the sense of critical theory) ought to be available to educators who are disposed to adopt a critical orientation in their Social Studies teaching. On the one hand, there is a need for an ongoing debate among critically oriented educators regarding the question what is the nature of critical mindedness, and how critical social theory can inform the field of education. And, on the other hand, there is the task to specify in some detail the content objectives for a curriculum that is motivated by a critical theory perspective. It is suggested here that the pedagogical elements of a curriculum for critical mindedness would include the following. These seven items are parts of the structure of critical argumentation. They are not simply skills or techniques, but rather they constitute the pedagogical elements of a critical orientation which should be built systematically into the curriculum.

(1) A reflexive orientation. Critical mindedness is a reflexive and open minded orientation. The literature on developing open mindedness in students, as well as teaching students an awareness about the concept of open mindedness is surprisingly scarce. A critical minded individual has the willingness to suspend judgment, to debate every point of view. Of course, one cannot debate every supposition at once, but being critical implies that one never stops questioning, doubting or disturbing certainties and taken-for-granted rules. This does not mean that a critical minded person has no beliefs, values and convictions. Critical mindedness is not a relativistic value orientation. And striving for open mindedness does not consist in the refusal to make up ones mind. The point is that social issues and social problems cannot be solved when social change is made impossible by the inertia of dogmatic thought. A dogmatist is a person who will not reflect on the nature and the assumptions underlying his own belief system. He blindly rejects new ideas and arguments that are incompatible with his own belief system. In contrast, a critical minded person is prepared to accept the challenge of an argument or debate, and he is willing to reconsider any position if counter arguments are brought forward.

A critical minded person is always aware of the fact that the things most taken-for-granted are often least visible. These are the norms, habits, beliefs and rules of everyday life that we all know but don't know until they have become subject to investigation. And then the world we are so used to "seeing" appears to contain profoundly "unnoticed" features. Ethnomethodology is a form of sociology that has chosen as its very object of study the "taken-for-granted" or "seen-but-unnoticed" aspects of everyday life. An ethnomethodologist sees every social event, and every social situation, as an "accomplishment". He asks, how do people bring about the social situations in which they find themselves? Seen from the "estranged" perspective of ethnomethodology our most "natural" ways reveal a strangeness somewhat in the manner in which the anthropologist perceives strangeness in the seemingly normal (normal from the point of view of the natives) routines and practices in the everyday life of an alien society. This attempt to "see through" things, to penetrate the illusory surface structure in order to come to an understanding of the deep structures of everyday life is what ethnomethodology has in common with critical social thought.

(2) Veracity and compassion. Critical mindedness rests on veracity and compassion: an attitude of love of truth as well as an attitude of care and compassion for the welfare of one's fellow beings. Wherever he looks, the world presents the North American citizen with incredible contrasts in human life styles and social conditions. Whereas in some parts of the the world people spend millions of dollars to go on starvation diets, elsewhere for lack of money people die from starvation diets because they cannot get off it. Overindulgence and obesity are contrasted with tragic waste of life and human suffering. Nations who have the values of freedom and equality written in their own constitution, help and keep in power governments that are repressive, corrupt and totalitarian. Even within the national borders of advanced industrial societies opulence, luxurious excesses and waste are contrasted with the scarcity,

misery, and alienating circumstances of poverty. The point is that in the present day world, development and underdevelopment, wealth and poverty, economic power and oppression are intricately linked. They are elements of a global system. However, in the social sciences and in the dominant ideology of western society this truth about social relations frequently is still as unpopular as truth was in Galileo's days.

(3) Social action by seeking emancipatory values in everyday life. Students should be taught to seek emancipatory values in everyday life. Emancipatory values are the motives for the question how to live. How should I live? How should society be run? Critical theory is constantly engaged in the debate regarding the meaning and possibilities of freedom, equality and community in contemporary society. Without liberty social criticism is not possible and without equality social criticism is reserved only for the privileged. But even under conditions of limited freedom and inequality a truly critical awareness is inhibited by the distorting effects of repressive social institutions. Thus a curriculum that promotes critical awareness does not claim to be "neutral" or "value free". Such is a naive form of ideology that pervades much of the current interest in values teaching and moral education. From the perspective of critical theory it is not possible to maintain a neutral or value free curriculum. When liberal-progressives argue that they place a high value only on "liberty" they have thereby also made a negative decision regarding the value "equality"--namely not to value it. This means that in such curriculum "freedom" becomes a standard or norm that is prized while other values such as "equality" are relegated to a matter of "taste". Students should learn about the nature of freedom as well as equality and inequality, and about its social consequences. In fact, students should be taught how inequality as well as the lack of liberty is characteristic of a society where critical discourse is not tolerated by those who feel threatened by it.

(4) Knowledge of relevant information. Critical mindedness rests on the ability to utilize relevant information: news items, social events, reported facts, critiques, opinions, views, and also a pertinent body of cultural and historical knowledge that

is necessary for critical thought and social understanding in everyday life.

(5) Awareness of analytic concepts derived from critical social science. Critical mindedness makes cognitive use of a network of analytic concepts derived from social science. Analytic concepts that frequently are the logical pivots of critical argumentation do not, of course, form a doctrinaire framework. However, there is no doubt that on the theoretic and on the practical level of social critique certain concepts must be understood. Individuals who are taught to think critically must be capable of relating a dynamic network of analytic concepts to concrete life situations. How can one learn to trace systematically common beliefs and problematic social events to their concrete roots? Marvin Harris in his Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches and related literature provides excellent case material. On the level of culture the concept mode of production clarifies how there exist systematic relationships among analytic concepts such as ideology (belief and value systems, religions, science, etc.), technology (tools and techniques available to a culture at a particular time and place), social organization (relations of production, stratified and egalitarian structures of institutions, domination and power), property (personal possessions and private property--only the latter type of property can "produce" more wealth and property for an individual), surplus (that which is produced over and above the caloric minimum and basic needs: it is the part of the production process that is claimed or appropriated by those who own the means of production in the form of profit, rent, interest, etc.), exchange (ways of trading, distributing or redistributing wealth: through balanced reciprocity, chicanery, hustling, etc.).

"Interdependence" and "conflict" are typically the more common concepts central to the Social Studies curriculum. But unless the concept of "interdependence" is unpacked critically it may remain a rather sterile idea, leading to silly motherhood type generalizations. The interdependence of peoples, cultures and nations has yielded much less brotherhood, cooperation and harmonious trade relations than usually

is implied by Social Studies texts. Analytic concepts are utilized critically in studying the origins of social inequality of racism, exploitation, poverty and underdevelopment. For example, in a comparative analysis of the effects of colonialism Clifford Geertz has shown how the difference in the social structure of Japanese society prevented the kind of disastrous effects of colonial rule in Java.

(6) Reflective awareness of methodological concepts. Critical mindedness involves a reflective awareness of methodological concepts such as the concepts of framework, interpretation, belief system, explanation, hypothesis, prediction, fact, value, definition, fallacy, evidence, truth, reliability. The objective is not necessarily to equip the student with the tools of behavioral research. Rather, the intent is for the student to be able to question or assess with some skill the validity of arguments, newspaper reports and knowledge claims. This skill involves a working understanding of basic techniques of explaining, predicting, validating, interpreting and justifying. Traditionally the term critical thinking has been associated with this ability. It also means that the student learns how to recognize and deal with basic fallacies in social thought. Various social studies projects have concentrated on this skill.

(7) Understanding common categories of critical reasoning. Students should come to an understanding of common categories of critical reasoning. One essential characteristic of critical mindedness consists in its disposition to demythologize and debunk common conceptions and beliefs. Eg., one can come to a more critical awareness of concrete beliefs and social events by asking the question "In whose interest is it?" The question, "in whose interest?" provides access to a set of related critical questions. What class, groups or individual benefits from a concrete social situation or event? On what grounds do certain people in society claim special rights, special status, special privileges, etc.? Ideology and rationalization are other categories frequently employed in critical reasoning. For example, a rationalization is an instrument

that an individual has available for hiding real motives and real reasons for acting. In a sense a rationalization apologizes for a condition or a situation that is uncomfortable to face or to admit. Similarly, ideological beliefs are rationalizations at the level of society. They serve to focus public awareness away from real problem sources.

If we listen carefully to the ways in which people express themselves on issues and questions which are vital to the construction of a more humane world or even to the very survival of the human race, then we can note a number of ready-made opinions and popular misconceptions that are prevalent among citizens of our society. These common misconceptions stand in the way of a more reflective understanding of the ways in which critical issues and urgent social problems may be perceived and analyzed. In their chapter "Why study social problems?" Horton and Leslie (1965) note that many people are like the fat man who wants to reduce without giving up any of the things he likes to eat. Similarly, many people would like to solve social problems if only this could be done without changing anything. Naturally this is impossible. A genuine solution of nearly any problem would require sweeping changes in existing institutions and practices. Change is threatening for the individuals affected by it and perhaps it is therefore that people tend to (mis)-perceive social problems in such a rationalizing manner that social change (i.e., doing anything about it) is seen to be unnecessary or impossible. In so far that people recognize the possibility for social improvement, only minor changes are deemed necessary.

A social problem may be defined as any undesirably social condition or situation that is judged by socially aware members of the community to be intolerable and to require social action toward constructive change. Not all problems that man attempts to solve are social problems. Some problems are problems of science, other problems we devise for sake of interest or entertainment. Only undesirably social conditions and situations that affect people or society and that are caused by people or society

we call social problems. Individuals hold a variety of beliefs about the factors that help or that hinder the world to become a better place in which to live. However, many beliefs widely held regarding present day problems and issues are uninformed, fallacious, and intermingled with vague conjectures, blatant prejudices and dubious suppositions. Ritchie Lowry (1974) speaks of three popular myths, or three common but fallacious beliefs which people hold regarding social problems and issues. These are what might be called common day theories in terms of which people tend to perceive (or rather misperceive) social problems and the kinds of solutions that are available.

First, there is the common fallacy of perceiving social problems as natural or inevitable occurrences--nothing can be done! It is not long ago that poverty and inequality were explained by means of religious doctrine. It is God's Will that some should occupy a higher station in life than others. The lower classes were urged to accept their fate. After all, who is to question God's design? As the physical and biological sciences gained influence over religious belief systems, new explanations emerged. Poverty, inequality and even slavery was explained as just-one-of-those things that can't be helped. It is Nature's Will that the better survive and the less able go downtrodden. More recently this social Darwinism has been replaced by a third social "myth". The argument goes like this "since we are all equal and free before the law and everyone has free and equal opportunity to succeed, it is nobody's fault if some individuals or social groups are less fortunate." These are the social forces, Society's Will, that produce inevitable inequalities and conflicts. In this view society is a "system" that moves through stages of growth or development. Again there is nothing one can do about it.

Secondly, there is the common fallacy that social problems are a result of evilness. People who argue this way, may simply deny that there is a problem at all. They feel that social problems are "made up" by pessimists or mayi - by communists who want to create disturbances amongst people. Nothing needs to be done because there

really is no problem! There are people who believe that there is a lot of nonsense about poverty in Canada or the United States. There is no poverty, they maintain. A second variation of the evilness fallacy is the widespread tendency to attribute social problems to basic human nature--to human aggressiveness, innate competitiveness, etc. It is easy to assign wars, inhuman cruelty, exploitation of man by man to human nature. There will always be wars, they say, because it is human nature to be aggressive and to fight. A third variation of the evilness fallacy is the inclination to perceive social problems to be the result of basic laziness or incorrigible wickedness of certain individuals or groups of individuals. An example of this fallacy is the argument one hears frequently that the problem of unemployment among youths or among North American Indians is due merely to their laziness and irresponsibility. It is clear that anyone who perceives a social problem in terms of this basic evilness paradigm therefore feels that nothing really needs to be done about it. You can't change human nature, they say, things just are this way!

The third social myth or fallacy in social problem perception is the belief that social problems are the result of imperfections in the victim or inadequacies in social institutions. For example, there is the common view that poverty and social misery are caused by inadequate education, by a low IQ (intelligence quotient), or by deficient home background, etc. The logical response to this blame-the-victim or inadequate-institutions is the recommendation for remedial help. Not much needs to be done! Problems are dealt with by treating symptoms rather than effecting structural change. Thus, we see attempts to wage the war on poverty through "head start" programs in schools. If only we can evelate the disadvantaged child to the level of average ability then we are fulfilling the promise of equal opportunity. Another variation on the blame-the-victim or inadequate institutions myth is contained in the simplifying response people have to such broad societal problems as high unemployment, inflation, the increase in the crime rate, delinquency, drug use, and

and inflationary house speculations. It is the fallacious notion that all it takes to deal with such social problems is some minor repair in the existing social institutions: getting rid of bad schools, some corrupt politicians, bad teachers, a few unscrupulous businessmen, incompetent politicians, etc. Unchecked welfare and "bums on unemployment" are seen to be the real cause for the increasing food prices in the supermarket as well as for higher government spending.

A frequent term of critical argumentation is the word "interest." It is seldom discussed as an analytic concept in social science texts but the idea of interest is treated in various contexts by writers on the subject of critical theory. Social critics frequently trace social problems to "vested interests" which are privileges that a social group considers its "right". That is, vested interests are based on claims to rights (rights that Veblen once described as the right "to something for nothing"). Alvin Gouldner makes an analytic distinction between the gratifications persons enjoy and the conditions or situations on which the gratifications depend. Whatever produces gratification for persons is in their interest. Material wealth and property are among the common interests men have. If certain social conditions or situations are such that they tend to promote gratifications through wealth, property, etc., then it clearly is in my interest to maintain, protect or seek those social conditions or situations. Gouldner points out that it is an essential aspect of the concept of interest that there is an implied cognitive ambiguity. The concept of interest is ambiguous in that it raises the question whether a person is aware or unaware of the relationship that exists between certain social conditions and the personal gratifications that are associated with them. To the extent that a person knows his interests he can deliberately and with rational calculation pursue them. But this conscious striving for gratifications raises the issue of accountability or justifiability. If the conditions producing our gratifications are known to us, it will also be known to us whether they are justified. (Gouldner, 1976, p. 211). Thus, if the social

conditions and situations that further our interests are socially not justifiably then this realization may, in fact, spoil or interfere with our enjoyment of the gratifications. It is psychologically more convenient for us "not to know" how unjustifiable social conditions are affecting the gratifications or privileges that we enjoy. In other words, it is in our interest not to know what is in our interest. "The inventory of unjustified gratifications people have enjoyed", says Gouldner, "is as long as the list of justifications people have invented. Nothing inhuman is alien to man. People prefer repeating experiences they have reported to be gratifying. And they loathe to surrender conditions they believe productive of gratification, or which they somehow associate with it". (1976, p. 212)

Conclusion

This article does not intend to offer practical methods and techniques for developing critical mindedness in teachers and in their learners. First things must come first. Reflection, conceptual clarification and practical deliberation must precede practical action. Educators who are ignorant of the socio-philosophical orientations that guide their actions and of the assumption that underlie their orientations, are unable to construct reflectively answers to the question what should be taught, why this content should be included in the curriculum, and how this content should be taught. Without doubt some curricula are more worthwhile and better defensible than other curricula. In the face of an ever expanding field of social science knowledge and in the face of alternative and competing curriculum possibilities, every social studies teacher ought to be able to justify the worthwhileness of his or her curriculum program. Some choice must be made. Those who profess not to reflect and not to choose, make a choice nevertheless. Their choice is to perpetuate a tradition of social education that is likely to be conservative, often fallacious or down-right irrelevant to the lives of the young people to whom the curriculum is devoted.

Can teachers handle a curriculum that aims at the development of social critical mindedness? No doubt there are teachers who can. But there are other teachers who would experience real difficulties if they decide to take a critical orientation in their social studies curriculum. Many teachers have enough difficulty in mastering common inquiry skills. Several years ago, Massialas and others found that high school teachers often are unable to distinguish statements of fact from mere opinions. Yet these same teachers answered in the affirmative when they were asked if they taught an inquiry approach (rather than a more traditional program). But inquiry skills can be learned by teachers as well as by students. It is obvious also that some aspects of critical thinking (in the sense of social criticism) are more complex than others. Students can be taught to increase their competencies to analyze and construct arguments in the debate of public issues. And teachers can build selected analytical and critical concepts systematically into the curriculum. But how does one teach "a reflexive orientation?" No doubt "open mindedness" cannot be imparted like information in textbooks, nor can it be trained like a technical skill. Open mindedness or the disposition to reflect resembles more closely an attitudinal competency or a character trait. In his article on the teaching of critical thinking, Passmore has noted that it is exactly with respect to the more complex critical competencies that teaching becomes education rather than indoctrination. A teacher becomes an educator when he or she begins to provide for the critical competencies that enable pupils to raise questions of worthwhileness themselves. For this purpose it helps if the teacher is a model of a person who is critical in the sense of this paper. A teacher who possesses an authoritarian personality may be "respected" by students but such a model does not likely lead to critical mindedness in students. Literature by Rokeach and related authors may be helpful in bringing about positive values. The striving for critical competencies poses a challenge to researchers and curriculum developers in social studies education.

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TOWARD A MORE RADICAL

CRITICAL MINDEDNESS IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

"In the end, there is probably no more powerful mechanism of social change than people's talk."
Alvin Gouldner

"In the process of enlightenment there are only participants, no privileged knowers."
Jurgen Habermas

Teaching critical social thinking skills in the public school has been attempted in a variety of ways. The analysis of public issues approach emphasizes jurisprudential reasoning skills based on the fundamental values of the American creed. The structure of the discipline approach employs reflective problem solving skills derived from the behavioral or positive social sciences. And the rationalistic approach to values education combines a relativistic ethic with moral reasoning skills. Research and development projects associated with the above mentioned approaches have contributed important understandings and teaching materials to the social studies school curriculum. Yet it is clear that these approaches do not exhaust the idea of critical mindedness as it can be gleaned from the tradition of critical social theory. Pupils need to become more intellectually independent and yet morally committed in a modern world where the public has witnessed the lying of a president and where the uncovered subversive activities of official agencies are directly related to people's livelihoods on local and on global levels.

In this paper an argument is made for a more radical concept of critical mindedness. Just like the English curriculum teaches students literary criticism, so the Social Studies School curriculum should extend the concept of critical thinking to social criticism. Competent citizenship implies the concept of the citizen as social critic.